

GOGEBIC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

November 27, 2019

County Courthouse

Bessemer, MI 49911

2:00 p.m.

***** Finance Meeting at 1:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (November 13, 2019 meeting minutes)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNTY BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS
(5-minute limit)

COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORTS:

1. Finance, Budgeting & Auditing Committee---10/23/2019
2. Personnel & Negotiations Committee -----11/13/2019
3. Ambulance Committee -----11/21/2019

COMMUNICATIONS:

(none received by agenda deadline)

TRIAL BALANCE/CASH BALANCE:

GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE CONTROL:

CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS:

OTHER MATTERS

PUBLIC COMMENT (5-minute limit)

ADJOURNMENT

GOGEBIC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2019

County Courthouse

Bessemer, MI 49911

5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Siirila. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken.

ROLL CALL:

**Present: (7) Bonovetz, Bryns, Laabs, Lorenson
Orlich, Peterson, Siirila**

Absent: (0) None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (October 23, 2019 meeting minutes)

A motion was made by Bonovetz, supported by Laabs and carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as presented.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Orlich, supported by Lorenson and carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the agenda as presented.

**CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNTY BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS
(5-minute limit)**

There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Robert Brown, City of Wakefield Manager
(RE: Adoption city resolution 266)

A motion was made by Orlich, supported by Peterson and carried by unanimous voice vote to receive the communication and place it on file.

2. Gogebic County Fair Board Chairman Jim Lorenson
(RE: release of FY20 County Appropriation)

A motion was made by Peterson, supported by Bonovetz and carried by unanimous voice vote to release the FY20 appropriation to the Fair.

OTHER MATTERS:

There were none.

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

County Administrator Julianne Giackino's update included having the Community Corrections people clean the Fair's convention building, she will again discuss the Medical Examiners position with people trying to form a West Michigan Medical Examiners group. Commissioner Bonovetz asked if the decision by Beacon Ambulance to withdraw from Dickinson County as an ambulance provider would potentially affect the County's ambulance contract with Beacon in the future? Commissioner Lorenson felt it was a business decision that only affected Dickinson County.

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PUBLIC COMMENT (5-minute limit)

Erin Ross of the MSU Extension office introduced Abby Samardich as the new Community Nutrition Programmer for the County through the MSU Extension Office.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Orlich, supported by Lorensen and carried by unanimous voice vote to adjourn to the call of the chair. The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Dan Siirila, Chairman

Gerry R. Pelissero, Clerk

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Finance, Budgeting & Auditing Committee, 10/23/19

No Recommendations

2. Personnel & Negotiations Committee/Committee of the Whole, 11/13/19

No Recommendations

3. Ambulance Committee, 11/21/19

- a. A motion to enter into a 2-year contract with Beacon Ambulance to include a 5% increase and the dates changed accordingly.**
- b. A motion to pay \$5,000 to Watersmeet Township for reimbursement for their first responder costs for a 1-year period.**

A meeting of the Gogebic County Finance, Budgeting, and Auditing Committee was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2019, at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse, Bessemer, Michigan.

Present: Peterson, Orlich, Laabs, Bonovetz, Lorensen, Byrns, Siirila

Absent: none

Also present: Juliane Giackino, Administrator; Gerry Pelissero, Clerk/Register; Lisa Hewitt, Treasurer; Brandon Tauer, Courthouse Security/IT; Pete Matonich, Sheriff; Kathy Jo Koval, Equalization Director; Linda Dean, Friend of the Court; Anna Talaska, Probate/District Court Judge; Heidi DeRosso, Emergency Management/911 Coordinator

Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M.

Clerk Pelissero indicated that there were claims from a credit card bill that should be approved. The cycle has not synced with the schedule of the meeting to this date. The amount was \$8,291.07 and also the Verizon bill is not coming in time to meet the deadline for claims.

Commissioner Bonovetz questioned if that motion had already been made.

The Administrator indicated that it the utilities that was included as prepaids, but she asked if the phone bill could be included with the prepaids. That being Verizon, Telnet & Spectrum.

A motion by Mr. Bonovetz, supported by Mr. Siirila to make the telephone bills part of the prepaids. Ayes 7, nays 0, absent 0. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed the claims briefly.

A motion by Mr. Bonovetz, supported by Mr. Lorensen to pay the claims as presented along with the prepaids and the add ons. Ayes 7, nays 0, absent 0. Motion carried.

The Friend of the Court was next on the agenda with her quarterly report. She had included the revenue and expenditure report, trial balance and Title IV-D CRP Actual Expenditure Report. She has received the medical incentive payment. She should be in the black soon by \$9,000-\$10,000. She asked if needed to continue to report quarterly before the finance committee. The Committee members felt that they would like to see her there quarterly to hear her reports. She said she would definitely do that. No action was taken.

The next item on the agenda was the employee's retirement system regarding the Manpower bill for fiscal year 2020 in the amount of \$970,164.

A question and answer period ensued.

The Administrator indicated that this amount has been updated to the legislators and this is the amount that is included in the request for the Governor's approval.

A lengthy question and answer period ensued as to the State, Governor, Legislators, the entire process, and the eastern end of the county.

A motion was made by Lorensen, supported by Bonovetz to send a letter to the Governor's office that a representative come to a County Board meeting and explain why the county is being denied these monies when others in a similar situation already received money. This has been a past practice, and this should be paid for by the State. It is their responsibility.

Discussion continued.

The Clerk indicated that he already sent a letter similar to that from the last meeting whereby Representative Markkanen's Director of Constituent Services appeared.

Commissioner Lorensen withdrew his motion to send a letter to the Governor's office and Commissioner Bonovetz withdrew his support.

Under "Other Matter", updates on agency/committee or Board appointments, Commissioner Bonovetz questioned the Forestry minutes pertaining to a pay increase and if that increase was following the MGT study.

The Treasurer gave an update on the 2018 class action PILT lawsuit and indicated that it had been settled and the county received \$14,607 check for the period of 2015 through 2017. She also stated that the lawsuit with Clark Hill on the Ironwood Township Embezzlement case, she has received a bill from the Clark Hill firm. It is broken down between the three entities and the County's share is \$13,637.05 for the time period of May to present. She questioned how the Board wished to see or approve such payment. This would be coming out of the delinquent tax revolving fund. The Committee indicated that they would like just a written summary from the attorney as to the progress or items being taken care of in this lawsuit rather than an actual meeting with the attorney via video conference and the committee would also like to see the bills as they are paid.

There were no further "Other Matters".

There were no "Public Comments".

A motion by Mr. Lorensen, supported by Mr. Bonovetz to adjourn. Motion carried.

**James Peterson III, Chairman
Finance, Budgeting, and Auditing Committee**

A meeting of the Gogebic County Personnel & Negotiations Committee/Committee of the Whole was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at 3:45 p.m., Courthouse, Bessemer, Michigan.

Present: Siirila, Peterson, Orlich, Laabs, Bonovetz, Byrns, Lorenson (arrived at 4:52)

Absent: none

Also Present: Julianne Giackino, Administrator; Kathy Jo Koval, Equalization Director; Gerry Pelissero, Clerk/Register; Pete Matonich, Sheriff; Heidi DeRosso, Emergency Management/911 Coordinator; Lisa Hewitt, Treasurer; Jerry Wuorenmaa, Executive Director for Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region; Vicki Schwab, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Chairman Siirila called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Chair Siirila indicated that WUPPDR & MEDC were present to discuss an Economic Development Administration grant opportunity. Vicki Schwab from MEDC requested introductions. She gave a brief history on herself and the people in the room introduced themselves accordingly. She gave a history of the MEDC and the areas that they deal with. They conduct retention visits of which several were being done this day. She came to Gogebic County when the prison closed and the MEDC group implemented a plan, a committee was put in place and a study was done to meet independently with individuals to determine what the areas of need were in the County to recover from the loss of the prison. Those turned out to be talent, tourism, infrastructure, branding and/or marketing. She stated that she has sample studies. These included a number of multistate economic development structures. Those are now in the process of being compared to Gogebic County. A county wide economic development organization was something that was talked about since the closure of the prison in helping the County recover from the closure. This grant was the start in achieving that.

Jerry Wuorenmaa, WUPPDR Executive Director took over a portion of the meeting and he too described his roll in the economic development process. He became aware of a three-year grant, a two-year staffing level to start the process of laying the structure for a permanent EDO. The question was, who would employ? WUPPDR did not feel they could do the best job based on the number of staff they have. There have been discussions with Gogebic Community Collage as a possibility. Jerry indicated he had spoken to President McNulty and there is some positive movement of them taking the position over. Since the flooding declaration of 2018 Gogebic County became eligible for an economic development administration grant through USDA at a funding level of 80%.

The discussion then turned to the CDBG monies that the county has held since the former EDC office disbanded several years ago. Ms. Schwab indicated that she and the County Administrator along with some staff at MEDC discussed those funds and what had to be done in order for those funds to be used as a matching portion of the Economic Development Grant. There is a process that needs to be done and the funds need to be returned to the State. The committee expressed concern on returning the existing monies to the state.

The Administrator indicated that she would like a letter from the MEDC indicating that those monies will be held for Gogebic County if and when this grant is applied for. The Administrator indicated that one of the items that needs to be completed is to look back and obtain the history of the four existing loans as to when they were paid, and the rest written off. These files are no longer stored in the Administrator's Office. The Administrator stated she would attempt to answer these questions.

The Committee spoke positively to the idea of an economic development organization however still expressing concerns on the entire county being a part of the grant process if and when the grant no longer exists and being able to sustain the funding for an office and/or staff.

The Commissioners spoke on behalf of their districts that they represent as to an actual economic develop person being hired. There still is much research that needs to be done in this process.

Commissioner Lorensen asked if there was a concept paper. He felt supportive but need some more information. The application process is available to the County until August of 2020.

A motion by Mr. Lorensen, supported by Mr. Bonovetz to support the concept of applying for the Economic Development grant through the USDA pending further formal details. Ayes 7, nays 0. Motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was the Prosecuting Attorney regarding the FY19/20 Chief Assistant Prosecutor's salary.

Prosecutor Jacobs was requesting reconsideration of the salary for the Chief Assistant Prosecutor. Her current salary showed an increase of \$164.

The County Administrator indicated that she had spoken to the Assistant Prosecutor and explained the process to her and that next year she would receive the full increment in her salary. The Administrator indicated to the board members prior to the meeting via email that she was not the only one that was in this situation of not receiving a full increment. The Administrator advised the committee that at the budget workshop she told the committee members how the elected and appointed salaries were calculated. The Administrator felt that the budget is in place and that these salaries need to be adhered to at this point in time however she did also recommend forming a committee to look at the original MGT study or to fix the revised MGT study.

A lengthy discussion ensued as to classification/compensation studies and the fairness and disappointing results to employees that is just part of the process.

The Clerk spoke briefly to the MGT study as it pertained to the employees in his office and suggested the same as to forming a committee to research the MGT study.

A motion by Mr. Lorensen, supported by Laabs to receive and place on file the letter from the Prosecutor regarding the fiscal year 19/20 Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney salary. Ayes 7, nays 0, absent 0. Motion carried.

Chairman Siirila indicated that he was looking for suggestions as to the make up of the subcommittee to review the MGT study. A subcommittee of the Personnel Committee would be chosen along with the department heads to see what is working and what is not working as it pertains to the study.

Under "Other Matters", Treasurer Hewitt spoke to obtaining Committee agendas prior to the meeting and also agreed that a committee needed to be formed and Ms. Koval study felt the same about the MGT study and a committee would be a good idea.

Chairman Siirila indicated that he was somewhat disappointed with all the negative comments of the MGT study where in fact the majority of the employees did receive a pay increase and did not really receive any thank you from the employees.

There were no further "Other Matters".

There were no "Public Comments".

A motion by Mr. Lorensen, supported by Mr. Bonovetz to adjourn.

Dan Siirila, Chairman
Personnel & Negotiations Committee/Committee of the Whole

A meeting of the Gogebic County Ambulance Committee was held on Thursday, November 21, 2019, at 3:30 P.M., Courthouse, Bessemer, Michigan.

Present: Lorenson, Giackino, DeRosso, Koval, Hewitt, Chermside, Bonovetz (arrived at 3:37)

Absent: Pusateri, Santori, Matonich

Also Present: Andrew Westeen, Assistant 911 Coordinator/Emergency Management

Chair Lorenson called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.

The first item to be discussed was the Beacon contract.

Chair Lorenson stated that Beacon would prefer a 2-year contract with a 5% increase each year, mainly to cover labor costs and equipment.

The Chair gave an update of what transpired in Dickinson County which prompted Beacon to pull out. He indicated that Beacon will most likely choose some better equipment which is now located in that area.

In order to provide better, more timely service to the Watersmeet area, Chair Lorenson provided a contract to Land O'Lakes Ambulance for service to cover the southern area of Watersmeet up to portions of the lake area. His perspective was that in the future, should this work for Land O'Lakes Ambulance, that they could possibly serve the Watersmeet area. There are a couple of Watersmeet residents that work for Land O' Lakes Ambulance. He indicated the contract with them would cost \$10,000 for a 1-year period. He further stated that they have much state-of-the-art equipment.

Regarding the Aspirus increase to service the Watersmeet area, there was about a 11% increase.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Commissioner Bonovetz felt that this committee cannot continue to look at this size increases each year.

Chair Lorenson indicated that 1 mill is not enough to pay for the costs affiliated with having ambulance coverage for Gogebic County. When the millage is up for renewal, there has to be discussion on increasing the millage.

Ms. Chermside commented on getting the attention of the legislators regarding rural ambulance service, rural hospital issues and mental health services.

It was suggested that possibly UPCAP and MAC, possibly even WUPPDR be contacted and adopt resolutions of this nature.

At present the Committee is waiting on clarification from Aspirus as to the increase in the cost, Land O'Lakes is reviewing the contract presented to them and the Beacon contract was the topic that needed attention at this meeting.

A motion by Chermshire, supported by Giackino to enter into a 2-year contract with Beacon Ambulance to include a 5% increase and the dates changed accordingly. Yeas, 7, Nays, Absent 3. Motion carried.

Lastly, Chair Lorensen stated that Watersmeet is asking for first responder reimbursement to cover their costs.

Discussion continued.

A motion by Hewitt, supported by Bonovetz to pay \$5,000 to Watersmeet for reimbursement for their first responder costs for a 1-year period. Yeas 7, Nays 0, Absent 3. Motion carried.

Also, Watersmeet wants a garage built, should they have an ambulance housed there.

The committee felt this action would be premature at this point in time.

Under "Other Matters", Ms. Hewitt, stated that she had looked at other county websites pertaining to millage and felt this is something that should be looked into for Gogebic County. It explains where the millage dollars are being spent.

No action was taken.

There were no further "Other Matters".

There were no "Public Comments".

A motion by Mr. Bonovetz, supported by Ms. Koval to adjourn. Motion carried.

*Jim Lorensen, Chairman
Ambulance Committee*